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ABSTRACT

This handbook contains specific suggestions and activities designed to assist small, rural school districts in identifying local resources for determining their readiness and capacity for curriculum renewal. State education agencies are becoming more active in curriculum issues, with new standards guiding local resources, practices, and learning outcomes. Much of the focus is moving from traditional process standards to the articulation of common curriculum goals, school performance reporting, and self-study. Careful analysis of available information can identify activities which are necessary to meet new mandates. Local curricular needs and priorities sometimes emerge from professional, regional, or national trends, which can be recast to reflect the local situation. Whatever the rationale for change, it is always necessary to review available resources in research and literature to identify current information. It is most important that district administrations support and foster renewal efforts. Policies that support school change are indicators of an environment that fosters improvement. Curriculum renewal should be a continuous process that includes research into existing literature. Curricular needs and questions often emerge from local improvement efforts, which can be transformed into broader goals. Long-term planning is especially important and should include creating an initial climate for change. The document contains worksheets to help districts identify local needs and resources. (TES)

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HANDBOOK ONE:
Curriculum Renewal--What is Involved for Small, Rural Schools?

May 1992

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Curriculum renewal is a timely concern for small, rural school districts. Of equal concern to these districts is identifying methods to assist them to assess their level of preparation for engaging in curriculum renewal efforts. **Curriculum Renewal--What is Involved for Small, Rural Schools?** is a handbook with specific activities and suggestions designed to assist small, rural school districts in determining their readiness and capacity for curriculum renewal. Within this handbook are definitions, suggestions and worksheets which will assist school staff and community patrons to identify resources they may employ to meet their curriculum renewal needs. It is organized into the following six sections:

- State Curriculum Frameworks to Promote Reform
- Local Policies and Incentives for Educational Improvement
- Research Information on Quality Practices
- Commitment to Systematic Improvement
- Local Needs Data and Desired Outcomes
- Long-Term Plans and Procedures for Curriculum Renewal

Following are highlights of the principal recommendations made in each of these sections.

State Curriculum Frameworks to Promote Reform

State education agencies are taking a more active role in curriculum leadership and have adopted standards guiding local resources, practice, and learner outcomes. Much of the states' focus is moving from traditional process standards towards the satisfaction of learner outcomes. Listed below are some general areas in which states have adopted curriculum policies and procedures:

- Specifying time requirements for the school day, year and for particular subjects

- Mandating specific subjects, such as English and mathematics, and requiring instruction in such specific areas as alcohol and drug abuse, and the American economic system
- Setting graduation requirements
- Developing programs for special groups such as handicapped and those for whom English is a second language
- Establishing textbook and other instructional materials adoption procedure(s)
- Specifying the scope and sequence of topics to be covered in various subjects and grades
- Mandating a testing program at specific grades in certain critical areas.

Local Policies and Incentives for Educational Improvement

There are times when local curricular needs and priorities emerge from professional or other regional and national trends. The local board of directors, with the input and support of the community and school staff, can recast regional or national trends to reflect the local situation. Regardless of the impetus for change, the single most important factor is how the superintendent or other administrators react to the proposed renewal effort. **How the school district supports the curriculum renewal efforts is the real issue.** Adopting district policies supporting school change are indicators of an environment that fosters school improvement activities. This procedure notifies other members of the school system of the district's intentions toward school improvement. Establishing procedures encouraging school growth by members of the school community builds a sense of ownership, investment, and confidence among those involved in the change process.

Research Information On Quality Practices

Whenever developing the rationale for curriculum renewal, always review available resources in research and literature as well as local and national trends to

ascertain what is current in the field. Below are listed some available sources school staff may use to gather information.

- State guidelines, curriculum requirements, and curricular guides
- Exemplary curriculum materials from other districts
- National Diffusion Network
- Educational programs that work in rural settings
- Curriculum projects and standards developed by nationally recognized professional groups
- Materials from appropriate professional associations
- Review of national curriculum trends
- Review literature from ERIC through your local college, university or regional educational laboratory

Commitment to Systematic Improvement

Curriculum renewal activities should be a continuous process with district procedures existing to foster these efforts. But care must be taken to avoid getting on bandwagons or changing simply for change's sake. A guideline might be--don't overdo it. Districts are well advised if they remember that there is no one "right" recipe for change and improvement. It is preferable for districts to build the capacity of their staff to handle any and all innovations rather than focusing on a specific one. One well known implementation model schools may employ is the Concerns Based Adoption Model (CBAM, Appendix B) which stresses the developmental stages adults experience when implementing an innovation.

Local Needs Data and Desired Outcomes

Often, curricular needs and questions emerge from other local school improvement efforts. The nature of these questions may become broad goals addressing a school district's entire program. Examples of some questions are:

- Are we adequately preparing our students for the future?

- Are we doing all we can to enhance creativity in our curriculum?
- Do we need to increase basic skills instruction in our schools?

These questions could turn into the following goals or desired outcomes:

- Prepare our students to grow intellectually for the future.
- Improve the basic skills achievement of all students K-12.
- Infuse more creativity into the curriculum, K-12.

Whatever the causes might be, locally-expressed concerns about school curricula offerings are fairly normal occurrences that school administrators have come to expect.

Long Term Plans and Procedures for Curriculum Renewal

The value of long-term planning is especially important because most states are in a renewal cycle which requires local districts to review and periodically critique curricula. Planning is particularly relevant because successful curriculum renewal will not occur without addressing needs, necessary changes and resources to bring about intended actions.

Listed below are the five major phases involved in long-term planning:

- Phase One--Creating a climate for change
- Phase Two--Developing the action plan
- Phase Three--Implementing the action plan
- Phase Four--Monitoring the action plan
- Phase Five--Reviewing and renewing the action plan.

This paper is divided into six sections analyzing the key components of the curriculum renewal cycle. Accompanying suggestions and worksheets are available to assist small, rural school districts to identify and utilize their available resources. Once this is completed, small schools will be in a better position to determine the necessary steps to take to implement their curriculum renewal activities.

PREFACE

The concept and development of a series of curriculum renewal handbooks evolved through several phases. It first began when NWREL found more and more small, isolated, rural school districts facing curriculum renewal needs with limited resources. This concern surfaced again when the regional needs assessment affirmed that curriculum renewal was of critical importance to the region's small, isolated school districts. NWREL's Rural Education Program subsequently identified alternative curriculum renewal approaches effectively employed in the field. The Rural Education Program next proposed to develop a series of alternative handbooks describing the strategies, technical assistance, and resource information small, isolated, rural school districts may utilize to effectively engage in curriculum renewal. For the purposes of the handbook series, the Rural Education Program defined curriculum renewal as follows:

> The process of those steps, procedures, and activities schools engage in to bring about change, modifications, refinement and improvement to the desired learner outcomes, materials, assessment procedures and instructional strategies. (Stoops, 1991, p.9)

An initial phase of this process began with a Curriculum Study Committee Conference held at NWREL in January, 1991. Seven regional educators representing state departments of education, rural education consortia, and educational service districts were asked to assist in meeting two objectives. NWREL desired input and discussion from these committee members about the alternative rural curriculum renewal models it had identified. Second, NWREL had decided to begin with the study of rural school consortia as a curriculum renewal model, and sought case study sites suitable for research. The Committee successfully met these purposes.

The second phase involved conducting a regional depiction study describing the status of curriculum renewal in small, isolated school districts. Completed in March of

1991, the Depiction Study examined issues of common concern and explored their implications for subsequent phases of the project. The major findings were:

- Curriculum change is viewed throughout the region as being particularly timely and deserves attention and allocation of resources to effect renewal.
- Although many small, rural schools have confronted limitations to curriculum renewal efforts, many of them are unaware that promising approaches exist which address these limitations.
- An important concern is not the further development of materials to meet standards or to strengthen curriculum. Rather, approaches are needed which stretch scarce resources to provide training, technical assistance, and opportunity for small, remote schools to build their capacity within the identified models. (Stoops, 1991)

The third phase ended with the completion of five case study site visits of rural school consortia and cooperative curriculum efforts. During these visits key individuals involved in the operation of consortia were interviewed. Five sites were visited: Union-Wallowa County Curriculum Consortium in northeastern Oregon, the Blue Mountain Small Schools Consortium in southeastern Washington, the Silver Valley Vocational Education Cooperative in northern Idaho, the Southwest Region and Dillingham Alaska School District's Cooperative in southwestern Alaska, and the South-Central Curriculum Cooperative in south-central Montana. These interview data are the primary information source for this handbook.

The fourth phase began with a Regional Design Conference conducted from June 26 through 28, 1991 at NWREL's offices in Portland, Oregon. NWREL's main objective was to gain the participants' input and suggestions for the design and format of a curriculum renewal handbook employing the consortium approach. The conference members, however, also strongly urged NWREL to develop first an additional handbook not originally considered. The members further recommended that the handbook be a guide designed to help small, remote school districts determine the status of curriculum renewal efforts in their districts. NWREL followed these suggestions and wrote this

document, *Curriculum Renewal in Small, Rural Schools--What is Involved?*, which becomes Handbook One of the series. Practitioners are encouraged to read this handbook first because it assists districts to analyze their level of planning for curriculum renewal efforts before deciding which approach is best for them.

When completed, the curriculum renewal handbook series will consist of four volumes designed to assist small, rural school districts meet their curriculum renewal needs. The titles and completion dates follow:

Handbook Two	**The Use of Consortia to Engage in Curriculum Renewal,** Spring, 1992.
Handbook Three	**The Use of Teacher Networks to Engage in Curriculum Renewal,** Spring, 1993.
Handbook Four	**The Use of Community-Based Support to Engage in Curriculum Renewal,** Spring, 1994.

Curriculum Renewal--What Is Involved?

Many areas of the public school curriculum have come under increasing scrutiny by practitioners, researchers and the general public over the past several years. One recurring need identified by the Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory has been that of curriculum renewal. There are many reasons for curriculum renewal--state department of education requirements, community-identified needs for change, school staff-identified change needs, emerging priorities and practices adopted by the education professions, and regional or national trends affecting local school programs. Small, rural districts throughout the region are recognizing the importance and necessity of curriculum renewal. However, these same districts are also expressing concern over their limited ability to effectively bring together the necessary resources and procedures to engage in the process. The issue, among small, rural schools today, is not the myopia Benjamin (1939) satirized in The Saber-Tooth Curriculum, where schools would not update curricula to reflect changing societal needs. It is not that small schools resist educational improvement. Rather, it is answering the question of how do small, rural schools, convinced of the need for change yet faced with limited resources, engage in meaningful curriculum renewal? This handbook's primary purpose, therefore, is to assist small, rural school practitioners determine whether curriculum renewal efforts are currently needed in their districts. If yes, how will the time, resources, expertise and commitment be garnered to successfully engage in renewal?

The issue, among small, rural schools today, is not the myopia Benjamin (1939) satirized in The Saber-Tooth Curriculum, where schools would not update curricula to reflect changing societal needs.

For the purposes of this handbook curriculum renewal is defined as follows:

> The process of those steps, procedures, and activities schools engage in to bring about change, modifications, refinement and improvement to the desired learner outcomes, materials, assessment procedures and instructional strategies. (Stoops, 1991, p.9)

Curriculum renewal therefore, is an ongoing process districts are continually engaged in. The projects may range in scope from being very large to those which are much smaller. For example, a large curriculum renewal project a rural school district could be engaged in is rewriting all elementary science curriculum to reflect new state standards. And on a smaller scale, a district could rewrite its ninth grade language arts curriculum to provide more descriptive composition activities for its students. What is important is that regardless of whether the project is large or small, the process for effecting curriculum renewal remains essentially the same.

Figure 1 illustrates the relationship and interactions of the different components involved in the curriculum renewal process. As the arrows indicate, these elements and concepts are not sequenced or arranged in chronological order but instead, are all interrelated and interactive to effect curriculum renewal. The following pages provide examples and suggestions under each of the main headings from Figure 1. They are not written with the idea in mind that a procedure should be developed in the order in which they are discussed below. What is important is that each of these components be addressed and integrated into a district's overall curriculum renewal plan.

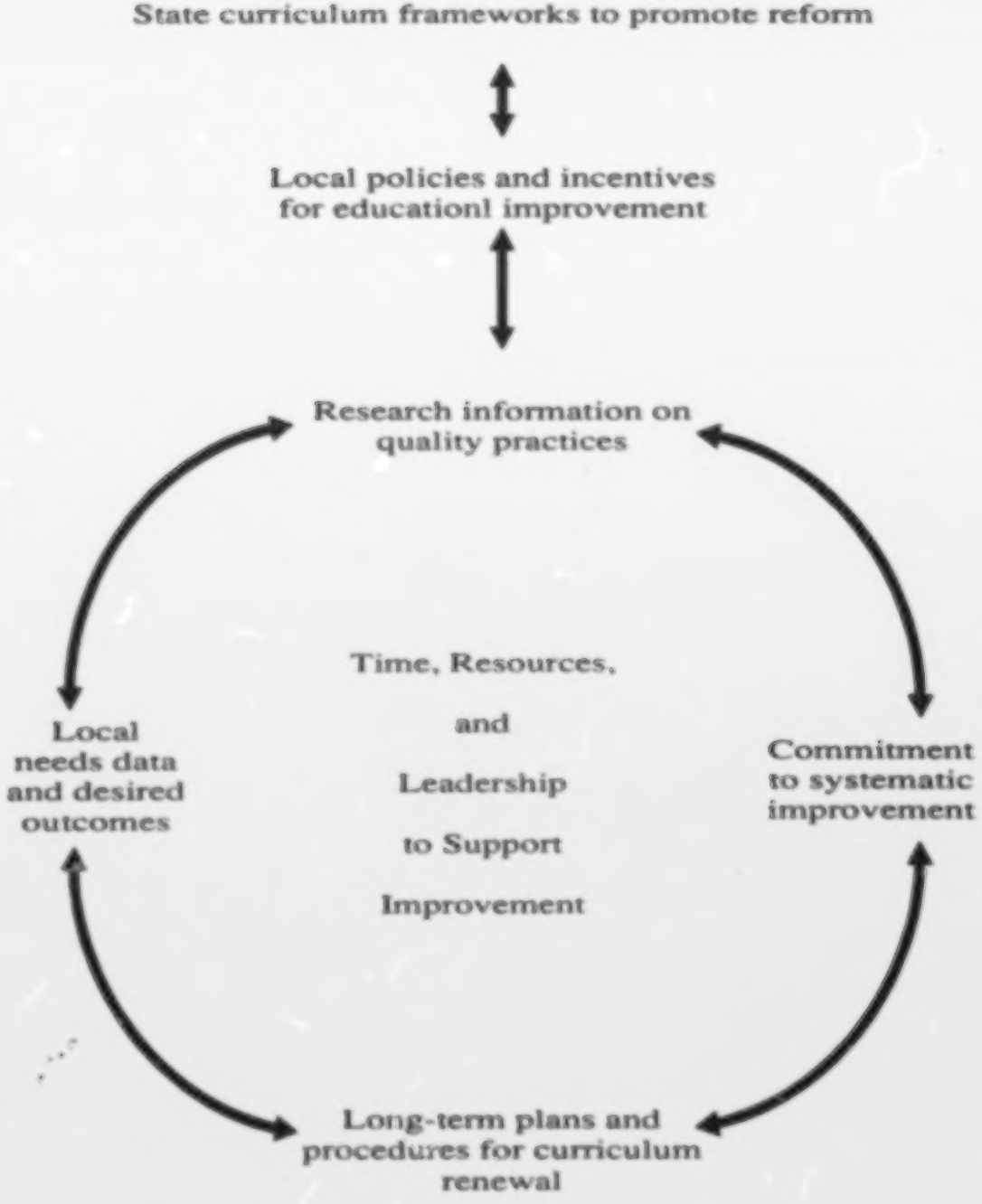
What is important is that regardless of whether the project is large or small, the process for effecting curriculum renewal remains essentially the same.

State Curriculum Frameworks to Promote Reform

State education agencies are taking a more active role in curriculum leadership and have adopted, at the least, minimum time and content standards guiding local resources, practice and learner outcomes. Although individual

Figure 1

Components of the Curriculum Renewal Structure



differences occur, commonalities exist in the states' influence and control over curricula. Several common procedures already exist within basic education accreditation standards among the five Northwest region states. (see Table 1). Much of the focus is moving from traditional process standards towards the articulation of common curriculum goals public reporting of school performance, and locally-driven self-study. This new thrust clearly places greater emphasis on local schools to engage in self-directed renewal--by articulating student outcomes and engaging in locally-driven improvement efforts. Moreover, states have differing standards for local schools ranging from generic curriculum frameworks to specific curriculum goals and skill areas that each district is required to implement. Listed below are some general areas in which states have adopted curriculum policies and procedures:

Much of the focus is moving from traditional process standards towards the articulation of common curriculum goals, public reporting of school performance, and locally-driven self-study. This new thrust clearly places greater emphasis on local schools to engage in self-directed renewal--by articulating student outcomes and engaging in locally-driven improvement efforts.

1. Specifying time requirements for the school day, year and for particular subjects
2. Mandating specific subjects, such as English and mathematics, and requiring instruction in such specific areas as alcohol and drug abuse, and the American economic system
3. Setting graduation requirements
4. Developing programs for special groups such as handicapped and those for whom English is a second language
5. Establishing textbook and other instructional materials adoption procedure(s)
6. Specifying the scope and sequence of topics to be covered in various subjects and grades
7. Mandating a testing program at specific grades in certain critical areas.

(Glatthorn, 1987a, p.135)

Table 1

Current Status of Major Accreditation Standards Around the Northwest Region****

State	Self Study	Report Card	Student Outcomes	Common Student Program Assessment	Onsite Visits	Other	NWASC***
Washington	Yes *7 yrs.	No	Yes	Yes	Yes * 6 yrs.	Yes	Yes
Idaho	Yes *10 yrs.	Yes **(1991)	Yes	Yes	Yes *E=7 Yrs. *S=10 Yrs.	Yes	Yes
Montana	Yes *10 yrs.	No	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes
Alaska	Yes *Annual	Yes ** 9-91	No	Yes	Yes *10 yrs.	Yes	Yes
Oregon	No ** 9-92	No	Yes	Yes	Yes * 6 yrs.	Yes	Yes

* Time cycle
** When begins
*** Northwest Association of Schools and Colleges
**** As of 1/31/92

School administrators and teachers need to know existing state curriculum requirements and be aware of those in the planning stages that they will be responsible to implement. If questions arise, administrators should request details from their state departments about any standards regarding timelines, content areas, available resources, and expected procedures for implementing the changes. Below are listed some suggested methods of determining and implementing state curricula requirements.

1. Maintain contact with state departments of education for current information, new directions, suggestions, and legislative actions.

2. Communicate with districts of similar size, situation and needs. Ask what they are doing to meet the new requirements.

3. Utilize available educational technical assistance such as educational service districts, rural education consortia or centers, regional educational laboratories, higher education institutions, state departments of education and professional associations.

4. Attend state legislative sessions, and volunteer to testify on relevant curricular issues affecting your district.

Analyzing information from the above sources should provide sufficient details to help determine what curriculum renewal activities are needed to meet new mandates. We recommend you use **Worksheet One, State Curriculum Standards Review** (Appendix A), to list the curriculum standards which will require district attention within the next three years. A graphic miniature of Worksheet One is shown below and the following paragraph provides suggestions and examples for its use.

A recent example of a small, remote school district needing to meet a state required mandate is **Riverview School District**. Located in eastern Washington, **Riverview** needed to complete the state required self-study within twelve months. Using Worksheet One, **Riverview** would write "Self Study" in column one. The targeted completion date (which in this example had to fall within the next twelve months) goes in column two. In column three, **Riverview** would indicate whether or not it feels the

district is able to meet this requirement alone or will need outside assistance. Since **Riverview** actually utilized outside assistance, this response would be indicated with a "Y". Information relative to **Riverview's** current status with this project, along with any other cogent information, should be written in column four.

[illegible]
[illegible]

[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]

*See Appendix A

Local Policies and Incentives for Educational Improvement

As mentioned in the introduction, sometimes local curricular needs and priorities emerge from professional or other regional and national trends. In addition, the individual boards of education are concerned that curricula reflect local community values and priorities. The local board, with the input and support of the community and school staff, can recast regional or national trends to reflect the local situation.

Regardless of the impetus for change, the single most important factor is how the superintendent or other administrators react to the proposed renewal effort. All superintendents and district administrators are involved, to some degree, in school improvement activities. But a question a superintendent might well ask is, "Does my district have a process in place that encourages and recognizes school improvement

efforts? " If the answer is no, priority should be given to establishing a procedure, seeking budgetary and operational support from the board of directors and informing the staff. The need for curriculum renewal **will** be encountered. **How** the district supports these efforts is the real issue. Taking steps to establish an environment that fosters school improvement activities notifies all members of the school system of the district's intentions toward school improvement. This, in turn, builds a sense of ownership, investment, and confidence among those involved in the change process (Fullan, 1982; Ornstein & Hunkins, 1988; Bailey, 1982).

Regardless of the impetus for change, the single most important factor is how the superintendent or other administrators react to the proposed renewal effort.

The need for curriculum renewal will be encountered. How the district supports these efforts is the real issue.

Research Information on Quality Practices

When developing the rationale for curriculum renewal, always review available resources in research and literature as well as local and national trends to ascertain what is current in the field. Use of as many of these sources as are available expands everyone's knowledge base for reviewing your current program as well as providing additional information for future use. Below are listed some available sources school staff may approach for information gathering (Glatthorn 1987b; Fielding, 1990).

- *State guidelines, curriculum requirements, and curriculum guides.* Closely analyze these documents to determine how prescriptive they are and how much assistance they might provide.
- *Exemplary curriculum materials from other school districts.* Examine what other districts, of similar circumstances, have done to meet this need. This may provide valuable direction for your own tasks.
- *National Diffusion Network.* Each state has a state facilitator who can help put you in contact with validated NDN programs.

- *Educational Programs That Work In Rural Settings*. (1987). ERIC Reproduction Service No. ED274 500. This collection describes exemplary NDN education programs in rural settings. This catalog is also available from the National Rural Education Association, Colorado State University, Fort Collins, Colorado 80523.

- *Curriculum projects and standards developed by nationally recognized professional groups*. Reviewing the results and products of recent national curriculum projects is another source of valuable information.

- *Materials from appropriate professional associations*. Practically every professional association has produced curriculum guides, position papers, and emerging trends. These can be very helpful to staff in training sessions. Don't forget to check with rural education or small school associations in your state.

When developing the rationale for curriculum renewal, always review available resources in research and literature as well as local and national trends to ascertain what is current in the field.

- *Review national curriculum trends*. It is a good idea to read and analyze additional papers and reports, besides those provided by the state department, to expand understanding of national trends in the field.

- *Review literature from ERIC through your local college, university or regional educational laboratory*. ERIC/CRESS (Clearing House for Rural Education in Small Schools) access provides a valuable, additional dimension to your information gathering.

Commitment to Systematic Improvement

Although curriculum renewal is an ongoing process and school district procedures should exist fostering such efforts, districts also need to be somewhat cautious and honestly appraise all improvement proposals. Avoid getting on a bandwagon or changing simply for change's sake. Since small schools have limited resources to commit to new innovations, part of the decision-making role is not to just ensure priority efforts, but also to ensure that new proposals will improve student performance. A guideline might well be--don't overdo it. It is easy to overtax people with too many priorities. Protect the limited time and energy of your staff as a resource.

There is no one "right" recipe for change/improvement. An important task for a district is not to prepare staff for any one specific innovation, but rather to build the

There is no one "right" recipe for change/ improvement. An important task for a district is not to prepare staff for any one specific innovation, but rather to build the capacity of the district to handle any and all innovations.

capacity of the district to handle any and all innovations. Attempting to deal with improvement proposals one at a time may lead to frustration and loss of time. Instead, the district should create a multi-year plan over four to six years to develop the core capacity of its key players (administrators, teachers, board members, classified personnel, and parents). Those districts able to process the demands which improvement efforts (whether internal or external) create, will be better prepared to approach these innovations in a systematic manner. Following are points districts may consider to enhance this capacity.

- Develop leadership and management capabilities of all administrators (superintendents, especially) to lead improvement endeavors.
- Provide resources, training, and the clear expectation that schools are the main units of change.
- Develop, with other administrators, school board members, teachers, and classified staff, a clear procedure for dealing with improvement efforts.
- Understand that implementing the adopted improvement plan presents a basic implementation problem. Create procedures which develop capacity among team members leading to their ownership and belief in the new efforts. For example, one well-known model is the Concerns Based Adoption Model (CBAM, see Appendix B) which focuses on the common concerns educators experience at different points of implementing an innovation. The model's purpose is to assist educational leaders to understand how improvement efforts might be more successful. CBAM is grounded on seven basic assumptions about the developmental process individuals experience as they implement an innovation.

    1. Change is a process not an event, and it requires time, energy and resources to support it.
    2. Change is accomplished by individuals first, then institutions.

3. Change is a highly personal experience; individuals change at different rates and in different ways.
4. Change entails developmental growth in both feelings and skills related to the new program.
5. Interventions should be targeted for the individual rather than the innovation, and actions to support the change process should take the individual's feelings and skills into account.
6. Allowances need to be made for the differing needs of different individuals as well as the changing needs of individuals over time.
7. The systemic nature of the organization must be considered when interventions are designed. Efforts in one area of the system may well have unanticipated outcomes in another (Hall et al., 1978). CBAM identifies seven stages of concern educators commonly experience when implementing a change in their building. A more detailed explanation and graphic overview is provided in Figure 2. Appendix B illustrates the use of the innovation through the various skills levels from orientation to integration. This is provided as additional information for those considering using this model (Saxl, Miles, & Lieberman, 1989).

Figure 2

Stages of Concern: Typical Expressions of Concern about the Innovation

	Stages of Concern		Expressions of Concern
IMPACT	6	Refocusing	• I have some ideas about something that would work even better.
	5	Collaboration	• I am concerned about relating what I am doing with what other instructors are doing.
	4	Consequence	• How is my use affecting kids?
TASK	3	Management	• I seem to be spending all my time getting material ready.
SELF	2	Personal	• How will using it affect me?
	1	Informational	• I would like to know more about it.
	0	Awareness	• I am not concerned about it (the innovation).

Source: Saxl, E.R., Miles, M.B., & Lieberman, A. (1989). *Assisting Change in Education: Trainer's Manual*

- Recognize that monitoring curriculum implementation also is ongoing and required throughout all phases of the improvement plan (Fullan, 1982; Bailey, 1982).

Ornstein and Hunkins (1988) recommend that districts consider the following guidelines when investigating the need(s) for curriculum renewal.

- Innovations to improve student achievement must be technically sound.
- Successful innovation requires change in the structure of a traditional school.
- Innovations must be manageable and feasible for the average teacher.
- Don't become rooted to compliance and rules following issues; allow for flexibility.
- Curriculum activity must be cooperative.
- Recognize that some people like to change, others do not.
- Proper timing is a key to increasing peoples' receptivity to a curricular innovation. (pp. 229, 234)

Local Needs Data and Desired Outcomes

Often, curricular needs and questions will emerge from other local school improvement efforts. The nature of these questions may turn into broad goals addressing the entire program of study offered by the school district. Examples might be:

- Are we adequately preparing our students for the future?
- Are we doing all we can to enhance creativity in our curriculum?
- Do we need to increase basic skills instruction in our schools?

These questions can well turn into goals or desired outcomes such as:

- Prepare our students to grow intellectually for the future.
- Improve the basic skills achievement of all students K-12.
- Infuse more creativity into the curriculum, K-12.

At other times, a report or trend will gain the attention of parents and communities and become transformed into local needs and goal statements involving curriculum renewal. For example, the SCANS (Secretary's Commission on Achieving Necessary Skills) Report (1991) calls for a systemic reorientation of America's schools to reflect more real-world application(s), which the Commission believes will result in higher student achievement.

> Today's schools must determine new standards, curricula, teaching methods, and materials . . . Placing learning objectives within real environments is better than insisting that students first learn in the abstract what they will then be expected to apply. Real know-how--foundation and competencies--cannot be taught in isolation; students need practice in the application of these skills. (p. 19)

A new industry moving into a community could read this report and subsequently request that the schools effect these changes in their curricula to make the high school graduates "job ready." Another example could be that a parent or citizen group becomes concerned about teenager drug and alcohol use and asks the schools to expand the health curriculum offerings to specifically address drug and alcohol abuse. Whatever the causes might be, locally expressed concerns about school curricula offerings are fairly normal occurrences and ones that school administrators have come to expect. At times, they can be primary motivators that warrant consideration for curriculum renewal efforts.

At other times, a report or trend will gain the attention of parents and communities and become transformed into local needs and goal statements involving curriculum renewal.

Worksheet Two, Scanning the Horizon (Appendix A) is provided to record and reflect local and regional data which may be of interest or concern to districts. Such data can be used in at least three ways: (1) adapt renewal efforts to better match local needs and values; (2) initiate renewal efforts based upon local needs; and (3) substantiate

or invalidate the need to begin a particular research effort. Following is a miniaturized version of Worksheet Two is reproduced along with a paragraph illustrating how districts may use it when preparing for curriculum renewal activities.

Whatever the causes might be, locally expressed concerns about school curricula offerings are fairly normal occurrances and ones that school administrators have come to expect.

Use column one to write any local curriculum renewal priorities brought to the district's attention. School staff are expected to respond to locally expressed concerns about school curriculum. For example, in the district mentioned earlier (**Riverview**) parents, community members and certificated staff implemented a school wide renewal goal of articulating the K-12 curriculum. For some time these three groups had been concerned about the lack of any sequence throughout the curriculum. Another concern was the general lack of knowledge teachers had about curriculum content within the individual elementary, junior, and high school levels. This lack of coordination had led to a fragmented transition for students at grades six and eight when they progressed to junior and high school. This was a high priority item **Riverview** developed as part of its self-study and could have been listed in column one.

Column two provides space to list any emerging regional economical, social, or educational trends the district may want to investigate. As an example, regional and/or neighboring local districts may have implemented ungraded primary programs that some parents and teachers may want investigated for possible local implementation. Another impetus for curriculum renewal can occur when teachers enroll in workshops or graduate school courses and obtain information on research-driven curriculum renewal changes. For example, whole language is a curriculum instructional approach emerging from numerous different fields of research that many districts are either investigating or implementing.

[illegible]
SCANNING THE HORIZON

[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]

*See Appendix A

Column three is created specifically for those districts wanting to investigate research identified trends influencing curriculum renewal and/or student performance. Once identified they may be later reviewed and analyzed for possible implementation.

Long-Term Plans and Procedures for Curriculum Renewal

The value of long-term planning is particularly important since most states in the region mandate a renewal cycle which requires local districts to review and critique subject area curricula once every six to ten years (see Table 1, page 13). Planning, therefore, is especially relevant because successful curriculum renewal will not occur without addressing needs, necessary changes, and requisite resources to bring about intended actions. No doubt a renewal cycle already exists in each district which involves district staff and community members. Part of the superintendent's long-term planning can be an inventory of the roles of board members, other administrators (if the district is large enough to have more than one administrator), parent and community members, and teachers in the curriculum renewal process.

Planning, therefore, is especially relevant because successful curriculum renewal will not occur without addressing needs, necessary changes, and requisite resources to bring about intended actions.

Worksheet Three, Personnel Inventory, (Appendix A) is designed to assist administrators and/or teachers responsible for curriculum renewal, to give some thought to the school curriculum team members. Are there staff members who are always **scanning** for new innovations, **early adopters,** if you will? Use these individuals as idea generators or locators of new ideas for curriculum renewal efforts. List their names vertically in column one. There are spaces to indicate whether they are staff members, board members, or parents and/or other community members. On the other hand, are there team members who usually question new ideas or interventions? These folks (sometimes **healthy skeptics**) can be perfect judges of the proposals the scanners or early adopters promote. Space is provided in column two to list their names in the same manner as in column one. There will also be a third group of individuals who are the **managers and doers.** Those individuals who, when given a task or direction, go out and see that projects are completed. List their names in column three. Each of these three types of individuals provide a healthy balance that can be very useful in curriculum renewal projects. Rather than resisting the energy these groups naturally generate (sometimes in opposing directions), it makes a great deal of sense to utilize their efforts and talents in a positive manner to gain their commitment and ownership.

Some questions a superintendent or other school leaders may well ask when analyzing school and community human resources are: "Which folks do I have in these roles?"; "What is the profile of the innovators in our school?"; and "How do I want to involve these people?"

Some questions a superintendent or other school leaders may well ask when analyzing school and community human resources are:

- Which folks do I have in these roles?
- What is the profile of the innovators in our school?
- How do I want to involve these people?

Superintendents or other school staff can use **Worksheet Three** (Appendix A) to analyze the attributes these people bring to curriculum renewal. A miniaturized graphic of **Worksheet Three** is provided below for your convenience.

Continuing with the example used throughout this handbook, **Riverview's** superintendent, knowing in advance that the self-study needed to be completed within the upcoming school year, could have used **Worksheet Three** to analyze school and community human resources. The three columns are self-explanatory and are useful for individuals or committees diagnosing personnel needs for a renewal project.

Worksheet Three*
Personnel Inventory

	"Who are the district's bottom scanners--the innovative people with new ideas, who are always looking for ways to improve the program"	"Who are the district's healthy skeptics--the conservative people who like to evaluate the pros and cons of ideas before making a final judgement"	"Who are the managers and doers who, when provided with direction and supervision, go out and get things done"
STAFF			
BOARD			
PARENTS/ COMMUNITY			

*See Appendix A

In addition to the inventory on **Worksheet Three** (Appendix A), it is advantageous to consider the following list of preconditions and suggestions before initiating a long-term plan.

- Long-term planning should be undertaken with openness and a willingness to engage in participatory leadership. Top-down, authoritarian management diminishes the effect.
- Governance and leadership need to commit to "stay on course" for enough time to evaluate the effectiveness of the plan.
- Organizational change requires change in individual behavior. Resources must be provided for staff development.

- Organizational structure streamlining may be necessary.

- Recognize that long-term planning is a way of thinking, of looking at what is and what could be. It is not a tool kit of techniques and models; it is not a procedure that provides a blue print for one "best way" approach. Each district must set up its own individual plan. The creative element comes in defining what the district will become. This is the challenge.

Recognize that long-term planning is a way of thinking, of looking at what is and what could be. It is not a tool kit of techniques and models; it is not a procedure that provides a blue print for one "best way" approach.

- People skills of motivation, spontaneity, and communication leading to trust building and rapport are most important. An atmosphere that fosters these intangible, organic elements of planning leads to more effective implementation (Payzant, 1989). Figure 3 illustrates the interactions among and between these components.

After reviewing these guidelines and preconditions for effective long-term planning, the next step is to establish a district curriculum team composed of district administrators, teachers, community members, and parents. (See Worksheet Three, Appendix A for explanation.) One of the first tasks this committee would be charged with is implementing the phases involved in long-term planning. Figure 4 illustrates the connectedness and interrelationship of these components.

District Long Term Planning Process

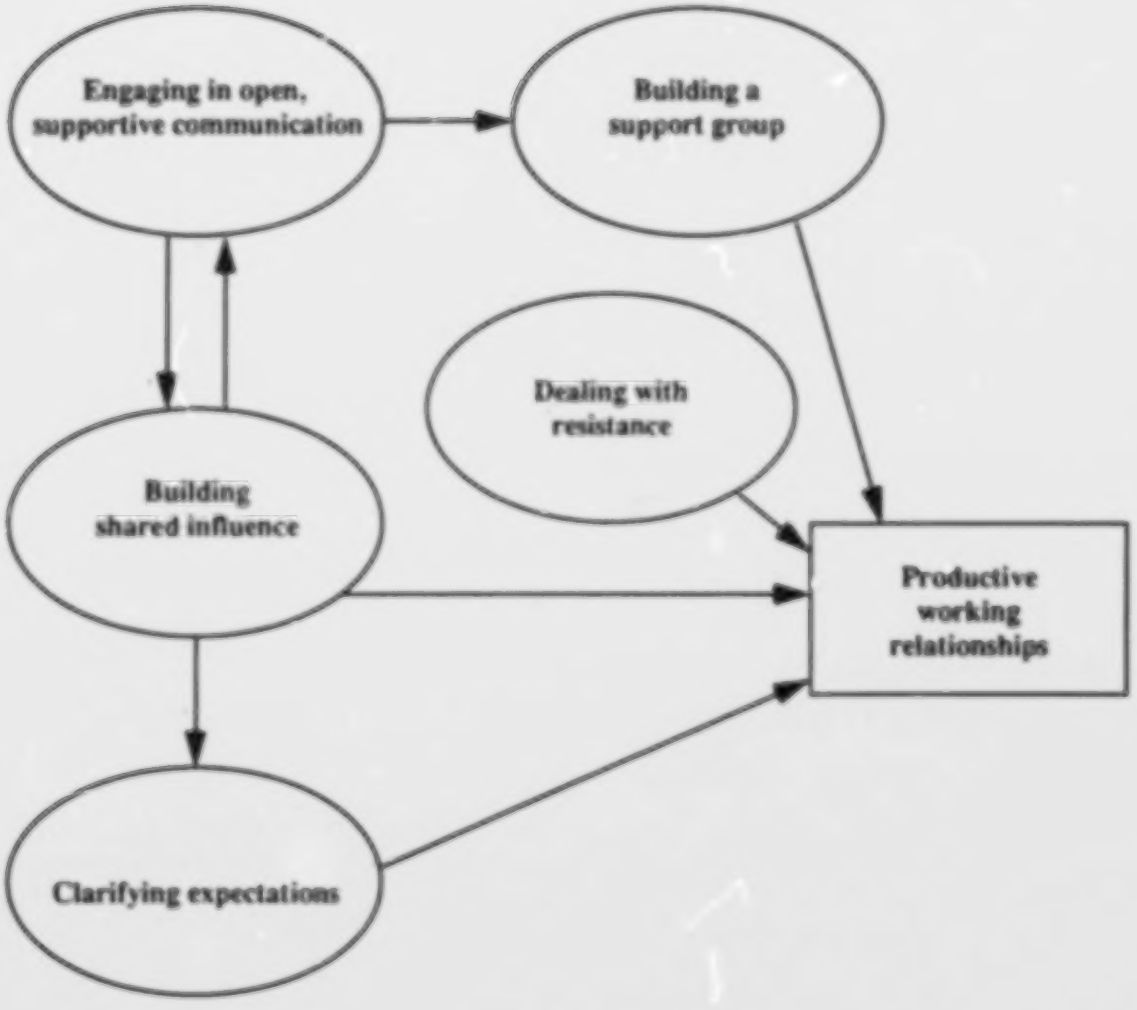
Phase One--Creating a Climate for Change

In this phase, the curriculum team should lay some groundwork and gain a commitment for the process from all of the stakeholders. A large part of the groundwork lies in data gathering to set the climate and adequately inform the key players who will assist in the project. There are two basic sources for data gathering:

External environmental scanning. Identify and investigate what external factors are creating conditions for change. These primarily are state and federal agencies. Determine precisely what changes are advocated and/or required. This is the step where the committee could use the data gathered from the procedures listed under the section headed *Research Information on Quality Practices*.

Figure 3

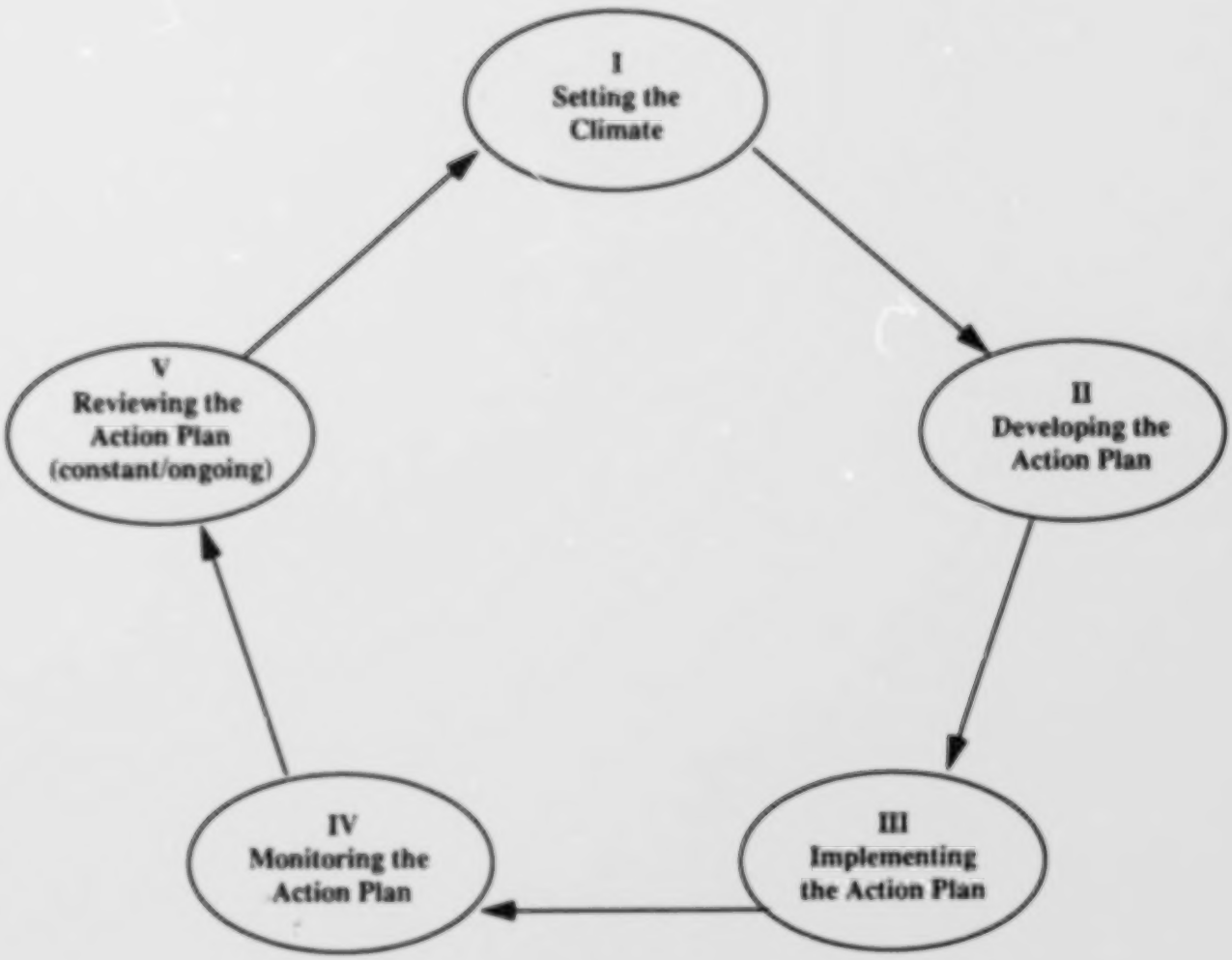
Key Aspects of Trust and Rapport Building



Adapted from Saxl, Miles & Lieberman, 1991

Figure 4

District Long-Term Planning Process Phases



Internal district/community scanning. Identify and investigate what factors within the district/community are advocating change and what are the aims, needs, and politics (if any) driving this effort? An additional, integral part of internal scanning is for the curriculum team to list its own district assets. In other words, analyze what plans, procedures, and resources are presently accessible that might be applied to the present situation as well as those available in the near future. Use Worksheet One as a beginning point.

Provide information and orientation to those most affected by the change and those who you most want committed and involved.

Next, take this information gathered from the data collection activities and use it for stakeholder education. These individuals include teachers, parents, and community members not on the curriculum team. Provide information and orientation to those most affected by the change and those who you most want committed and involved. The orientation should emphasize what the district needs for curriculum renewal. Much of this orientation introduces the participants to the work, decisions the curriculum committee has recommended, and the important roles which stakeholders will play in the success of the effort.

Phase Two--Developing the Action Plan

This activity, or series of activities, should be conducted as a group process with all of the curriculum team members actively involved. Consideration and time should be given to creating a plan that includes:

- Outlining needed resources required to effect the required change(s). This should include: timelines, cost and budgeting expectations, personnel needed, necessary materials, and scope of the project. Within the scope of the project should be a "gap analysis" which identifies the gaps or disparities between the current situation and the ideal or targeted goal.

- Designing specific strategies to bring about change in targeted improvement areas. These strategies should be designed to meet both short- and long-term needs. Long-term indicates the ideal situation at the end of this project and short-term are those stepping-stone accomplishments that gradually eliminate the gaps identified above and help attain the long-range goal. This should include specific timelines and budget details for each strategy, especially those details needed for present

and ongoing inservice training for staff. Also, address the concern of whether orientation sessions are needed for board of directors, parents, and community members.

- Designing an evaluation plan that includes measurable indicators of "where we are going" and "how we will know we have arrived".
- Revising and finalizing plan.
- Seeking board of directors' approval. (Payzant, 1989)

Phase Three--Implementing the Action Plan

In this phase, the curriculum team puts the plan into action. The team works to ensure that implementation actually brings into operation what has been planned. Some steps involved include:

- Allocate previously identified resources.
- Train staff--see that staff development sessions are conducted.
- Develop building plans in districts with more than one building.

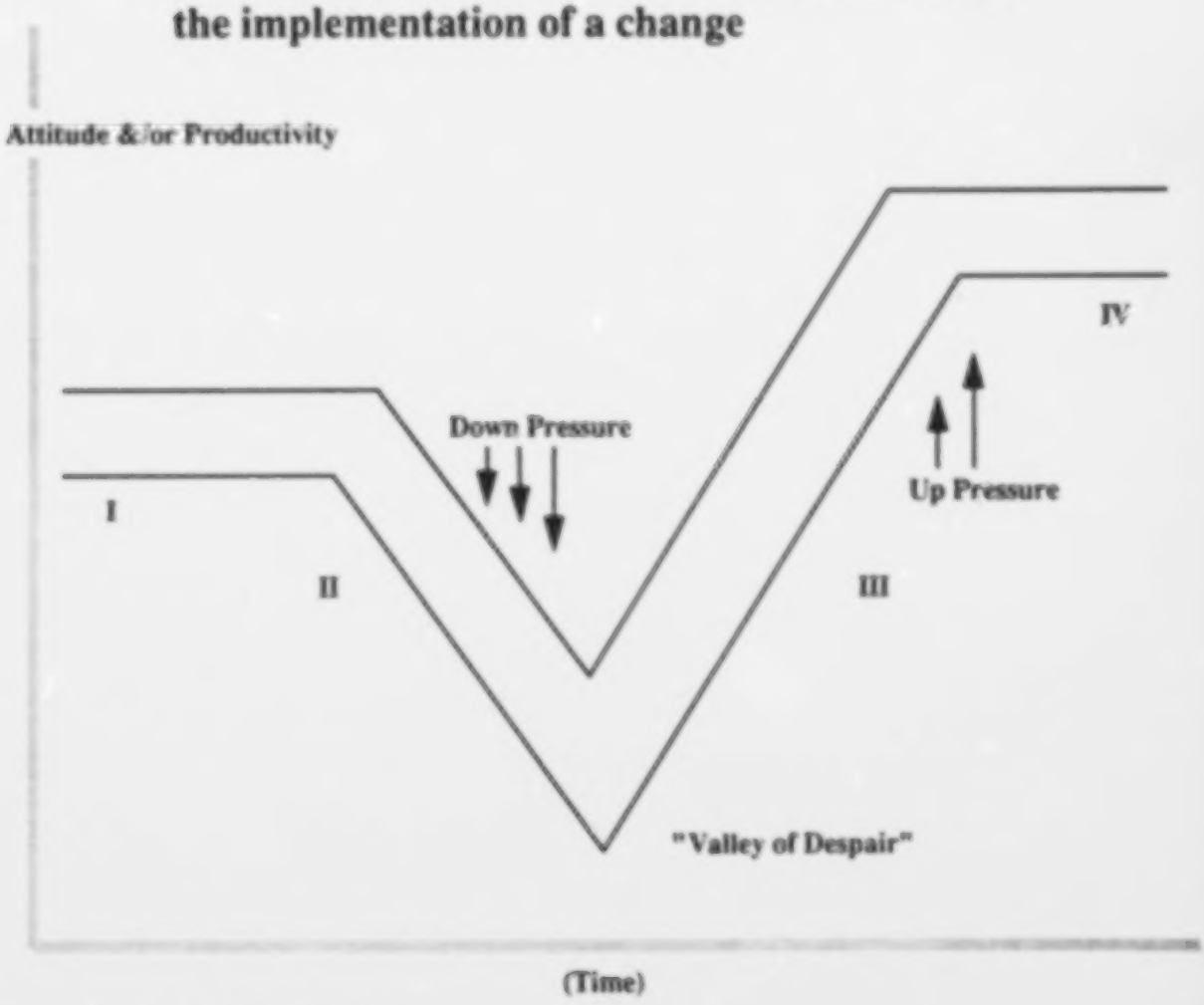
Phase Four--Monitoring the Action Plan

The monitoring phase helps the curriculum team answer the question, "How do we know if we have attained our goals?". Comparing action plan goals to the implementation phase accomplishments is a constant problem solving and modifying process.

- Develop a formative evaluation process which allows revision as necessary while maintaining action plan integrity and fidelity. Comparing implementation results with goals and objectives helps to determine what should be continued in this phase and what should not.
- Expect that more often than not, especially during the early stages of Phase Three, the skill and ability levels of the staff to get worse before they get better. Fullan (1991) designates this behavioral change "The Implementation Dip". Others refer to this downward spiral as "The Valley of Despair". This development is a predictable occurrence in adult learning and soon improves to a knowledge or performance level higher than it had been before the implementation phase. Figure 5 illustrates the different stages and levels of this phenomenon (Erickson, 1991).

Figure 5

The curve represents the "V" impact on related production &/or attitude which usually follows the implementation of a change



I Initial Equilibrium

II Decline/Drop

III Rise

IV New Equilibrium

Source: Erickson, 1991; Fullan with Stiegelbauer, 1991, p. 91.

Phase Five--Reviewing the Action Plan

This phase is a constant process involving continuing evaluation, replanning and revision. This phase can also be considered a renewal step leading the entire planning process back to Phase One to begin again.

- Progress is evaluated and changes are examined, especially in improved student learning and in the teaching-learning process.
- Determine whether additional outreach efforts are justified.
- Seek new methods to assure institutionalization of the changes into standard district operations. Some questions one might ask that would assist in determining the level of institutionalization follow.

  1. Do new staff receive orientation and training in the program?
  2. Do current staff receive follow-up sessions to ensure maintenance of the program?
  3. Is the program formally incorporated into curriculum plans?
  4. Does the budget have a separate line item for the program? (Blum & Kneidek, 1991; Loucks-Horsley & Hergert, 1985; Payzant, 1989).

Human and fiscal resources are fundamental to any school improvement effort.

Phases One through Five, above, are traditional planning steps primarily designed for urban settings. Small, rural school administrators may want to test the conventional wisdom and utility of these models in their settings. They are presented above as guidelines that may provide usable additional information. Appendix C indicates how these phases might play out in rural settings.

The thought that naturally comes to mind is, 'How do we accomplish all of this?' Figure 1 (page 11) lists the components of time, resources, and leadership as the necessary support elements of curriculum renewal. Human and fiscal resources are

fundamental to any school improvement effort. Questions to consider when analyzing human resources are:

- What staff do I have in my district who would help with this?
- Who in the community would assist in this improvement intervention?
- Is there anyone in the PTA, or other parent-school group, willing and able to assist? (See Worksheet Three)

When examining fiscal assets, a primary concern usually is:

- What resources do I have available to devote to curriculum renewal?

Areas to explore are:

1. Inservice budget
2. Chapter 2 funds
3. Early release time of students
4. State grant funds

Administrative leadership is recognized as a critical element necessary to bring about any lasting improvement innovation.

When analyzing time requirements needed for curriculum renewal, it is a good idea to determine whether it is acceptable locally to conduct the working sessions during regular school hours or whether extended contract time is needed. If local conditions call for extended time, then additional planning may be necessary to prepare budgets needed to fund teacher release time. Communicating with the teachers and soliciting their input will provide them valuable ownership in the project, gain their support, and also demonstrate that you are sincerely wanting to avoid teacher burnout.

Administrative leadership is recognized as a critical element necessary to bring about any lasting improvement innovation. When exploring the level of support for a particular curriculum renewal effort, superintendents might consider the following questions:

1. Do I have the support of the board of directors?
2. Do I, as superintendent, demonstrate support for curriculum renewal in word and deed?
3. Does the staff support these efforts?
4. Do I have the staff, parents, and community behind me?

Answers to these questions tell the administrator how well (s)he has provided the necessary leadership to first inform and then gain support from these constituencies. The key is not controlling these groups but rather, influencing them to understand the need for engaging in curriculum renewal.

Worksheet Four, Inventory of Curriculum Renewal Resources (Appendix A), is designed to help administrators and other school staff develop an inventory of the above listed resources. It is an easy and handy brainstorming tool that may be coordinated with the other worksheets in this handbook to provide a more complete resource picture for school staff and school board members. Used together, these worksheets can be an inventory status report of how to acquire and administer the necessary human, fiscal, time, and community resources needed to bring about curriculum renewal. Analyzing resources in this fashion allows districts to readily see what they presently possess in the various categories and compare it to what they need. See miniaturized **Worksheet Four** for example.

Completion of the inventory (along with the other worksheets) brings administrators, other school staff, and community members to the final purpose of this handbook. School districts do have some options for how to support curriculum renewal. Furthermore, analyzing **Worksheet Four** should indicate to districts whether they have the resources to engage in curriculum renewal on their own or whether they need to gain outside resources. If no outside resources are required, then individual districts may be able to proceed with their own curriculum renewal efforts. However, if assistance is needed, other options do exist. NWREL has identified three promising approaches

small, rural schools in the Northwest have employed to bring about curriculum renewal through shared resources:

Worksheet Four*

Inventory of Curriculum Renewal Resources

District Resources	What do we have?	What do we need?
Human:		
Staff:		
Parent/School Group:		
Board:		
Other Community:		
Fiscal:		
In-service Budget:		
Chapter 2 Funds:		
Release Time:		
State Grant Funds:		
Support of Local Business or Industry:		

Time:		
Regular School Hours:		
Extended Contract Time: mornings, evenings, weekends, summers:		
Leadership:		
Board Support?		
Non-supervised Superintendent Support of Project?		
Staff Support of Project?		
Parents, Community, Staff Behind Superintendent?		
Has the district considered all of the available resources and strategies?		

*See Appendix A

1. **Consortium-based support.** Small districts have formed cooperatives to share the services of a curriculum consultant and, in other cases, worked closely with educational services districts and higher education faculty. Districts can offset inadequate human, material, and financial resources by sharing and adopting appropriate curriculum renewal strategies. Beyond the advantages to small schools in offsetting limited resources, cooperative efforts provide benefits which address issues of community resistance, professional isolation, and teacher retention. This approach may be especially appropriate for districts with limited resources and/or experience as members of a consortium or cooperative.

2. **Peer-based support.** Teacher networks within and across schools enable shared expertise and resources. Teacher peer support provides opportunities for

professional growth and awareness of resources necessary for desired curriculum and instructional renewal work. Peers helping each other by sharing knowledge, skills, and resources can be a powerful model for curriculum renewal. In addition, the expanding use of technology in telecommunications, audio and computer conferences, are effective tools that have enhanced peer-based networking and support. This approach may be appropriate for small, remote, rural schools with a history of working together to meet curriculum renewal needs, particularly for secondary and other specialized school personnel who feel professionally isolated.

3. **Community-based support.** Community members are utilized to maximize the human resources available for curriculum articulation and delivery. Using parental assistance and in-kind contributions from the rural community is an effective way to offset inadequate resources. Retired professionals, homemakers, residents with special expertise, and other individuals can often be recruited to lend their skills and energy to curriculum renewal efforts. This approach enhances community ownership and support for locally relevant curriculum. Schools which value widespread community support and involvement, and presently have the local human resources necessary for curriculum renewal, may want to consider this approach.

As can be seen by Figure 6, the traditional large school approach has been the use of school curriculum teams (1) which produced high local ownership and feasibility of implementation. However, in very small rural schools, both expertise and resources may be limited. The most common alternative (used by large schools) is the employment of an expert consultant (2) to do the job. Our experience has shown a low return on the cost investment because of the lack of local ownership and feasibility of implementation. The remaining three options (3, 4, and 5 more fully described on pages 35 and 36) are the focus of this project. We believe that they provide a more reasonable balance of cost, expertise and feasibility.

Handbooks will be developed for each of these curriculum renewal approaches to assist small, rural schools meet their curriculum renewal needs. The handbooks are scheduled to be completed and available as follows:

Consortium-Based Support, Spring, 1992;
Peer-Based Support, Spring, 1993; and
Community-Based Support, Spring, 1994.

Figure 6

Strategies for Supporting Curriculum Renewal in Small, Rural Schools

STRATEGIES	GOALS 1. LOCAL OWNERSHIP	2. EXPERTISE	3. COST EFFECTIVE	4. FEASIBLE
1. SCHOOL CURRICULUM TEAMS	H	M	L	H
2. EXPERT CONSULTANTS	L	H	M	L
3. COMMUNITY-BASED SUPPORT	H	M	M	H
4. REGIONAL COOPERATIVES	M	M	H	M
5. PEER SUPPORT, E.G., TEACHER NETWORKS	M	M	H	M

H = HIGH
M = MODERATE
L = LOW

APPENDIX A

Worksheet One
State Curriculum Standards Review

State Requirement	Targeted date	Outside Assistance Needed (Y/N)	Current District Status

Worksheet Two
Scanning the Horizon

Local needs or priorities for curriculum renewal?	Regional or local economical, social, educational trends?	Research identified trends affecting curriculum and desired student performance?

Worksheet Three
Personnel Inventory

	Who are the district's horizon scanners--the innovative people with new ideas, who are always looking for ways to improve the program?	Who are the district's healthy skeptics--the conservative people who like to evaluate the pros and cons of ideas before making a final judgement?	Who are the managers and doers who, when provided with direction and supervision, go out and get things done?
STAFF			
BOARD			
PARENTS/ COMMUNITY			

Worksheet Four
Inventory of Curriculum Renewal Resources

District Resources	What do we have?	What do we need?
Human:		
Staff:		
Parent/School Group:		
Board:		
Other Community:		
Fiscal:		
Inservice Budget:		
Chapter Two Funds:		
Release Time:		
State Grant Funds:		
Support of Local Business or Industry:		

Worksheet Four (continued)

District Resources	What do we have?	What do we need?
Time:		
Regular school hours		
Extended contract time: mornings, evenings, weekends, summers		
Leadership:		
Board support?		
Demonstrated superintendent support of project?		
Staff support of project?		
Parents, community, staff behind superintendent?		
Has the district considered all of the available resources and strategies?		

APPENDIX B

CBAM
Levels of Use of the Innovation

Level 0 - Non-Use

State in which the individual has little or no knowledge of the innovation, no involvement with it, and is doing nothing toward becoming involved.

DECISION POINT A - Takes action to learn more detailed information about the innovation.

Level I - Orientation

State in which the individual has acquired or is acquiring information about the innovation and/or has explored its value orientation and what it will require.

DECISION POINT B - Makes a decision to use the innovation by establishing a time to begin.

Level III - Mechanical Use

State in which the user focuses most effort on the short-term, day-to-day use of the innovation with little time for reflection. Changes in use are made more to meet user needs than needs of students and others. The user is primarily engaged in an attempt to master tasks required to use the innovation. These attempts often result in disjointed and superficial use.

DECISION POINT D-1 - Establishes a routing pattern of use.

Level IV-A - Routine

Use of the innovation is stabilized. Few if any changes are being made in ongoing use. Little preparation or thought is being given to improve innovation use or its consequences.

DECISION POINT D-2 - Changes use of the innovation based on formal and informal evaluation in order to increase client outcomes.

Level IV-B - Refinement

State in which the user varies the use of the innovation to increase the impact on clients (students and others) within the immediate sphere of influence. Variations in use are based on knowledge of both short- and long-term consequences for clients.

DECISION POINT E - Initiates changes in use of the innovation based on input from and in coordination with colleagues for benefit of clients.

Level V - Integration

State in which the user is combining own efforts to use the innovation with related activities of colleagues to achieve a collective impact on clients within their common sphere of influence.

DECISION POINT F - Begins exploring alternatives to or major modification of the innovation currently in use.

Level VI - Renewal

State in which the user reevaluates the quality of use of the innovation; seeks major modifications of, or alternatives to, present innovation to achieve increased impact on clients; examines new developments in the field; and explores new goals for self and the organization.

APPENDIX C

IMPLEMENTATION OF URBAN PLANNING MODEL IN SMALL, RURAL SETTINGS

Urban Models	Small, Rural Schools
Phase One--Internal and external scanning.	All-district staff meeting, selected parents, and community members are in "committee of the whole." Internal and external scanning may occur simultaneously. Stakeholder education is integral part of the first meeting. Some local scanning will probably occur as informal street talk with local citizens. (Phase One) This may be an ongoing process rather than an "event."
Phase Two--Curriculum team creates "Action Plan" for district.	"Action Plan" development involves all staff. Information sharing and dissemination occur simultaneously in a collaborative process. Revision and final approval may occur in same meetings. Less attention to within grade level curriculum consistency and more attention to conditions between grades and subjects. (Phases One and Two)
Phase Three--Implementation. A considerable portion of staff training is required prior to full implementation. Building plans may need to be created.	Implementation. Continuous growth process occurring throughout Phases One through Three. Implementation is much more direct. Change becomes very personal, allowing for growth in both feelings and skills which may result in faster institutionalization. (Phases One-Three)
Phase Four--Monitoring, ongoing. May treat different content areas differently.	Monitoring, ongoing from Phase One through Phase Five. Actively addresses the question of whether each subject area or classroom should be treated the same or differently. Considerable amounts of monitoring information exchanged in short, casual encounters between staff members. "How's it going?" kinds of discussions rather than paper-oriented observations. Communications loop is short, allowing for rapid dissemination of monitoring results. (Phases One-Five)
Phase Five--Reviewing the Plan.	Reviewing the Plan. Reviews tend to be dealt with through general discussions at faculty meetings. (Phases One-Five)

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